



Youth Exchange Hosting Challenge

U.S. Department of State Office of Citizen Exchanges

The Importance of Hosting

By hosting, you have a chance to make a difference in today's fast paced environment - you don't have to leave your own home to be a volunteer, you can just open up your home, heart and mind to create a mutually beneficial learning environment.

▶ Since September 11, Americans have asked how they can contribute to their country. Individuals participate in a variety of service activities as part of a longstanding American tradition of service and volunteerism for the public good. Hosting is a way to contribute.

▶ By hosting, you can ensure that exchange participants have a positive experience and take back a positive impression of the United States.

▶ Hosting a student or international visitor impacts our relations with other countries. Anyone can volunteer to support foreign relations by hosting students and visitors who are eager to learn about every-day American life.

▶ Hosting exchange students provides an education for your children. They learn tolerance, history, geography, and language. An international learning opportunity is an integral part of the educational experience of young people.

▶ Hosting provides an international education at any age. Hosting foreign students is an excellent way for retirees to stay engaged and active.

▶ Hosting improves the image of the U.S. abroad. Being a host can help exchange students/visitors experience real American families - not the stereotypes that develop from images in American television and film.

▶ Host families and schools that are committed, caring and supportive can ensure the success safety, health and welfare of our exchange students.

Exchange Highlights

- Youth exchange programs vary in lengths of stay from a few weeks to a full academic year. Students, generally aged 15 to 18, come from many countries around the world and are carefully selected for leadership, language ability, academic achievement, and motivation.
- State Department programs focus on the recruitment of diverse ethnic and social groups, girls and students with disabilities to ensure an equal opportunity to participate in exchange.
- Students are hosted in all 50 states with a focus on outreach that is representative of the cultural and social diversity of America's population.
- During International Education Week (IEW) in November 2005, 1,395 students on Department of State sponsored programs, gave over 2900 presentations about their home countries, reaching almost 103,000 Americans in classrooms, at community gatherings, and to religious congregations and businesses.

Challenge America: Be a Global Neighbor

The State Department is embarking on a national strategy to challenge the business community, academic community, special interest groups, local and state governments and private citizens to support youth exchange as part of its broader Public Diplomacy initiatives.

Initiatives:

▶ Increase the pool of American host families. Challenge Americans to answer the call to service by serving as host families.

▶ Increase the pool of American high schools. Challenge the academic community to engage in exchanges and international education that have an impact on American students as well as exchange students that the US hosts.

Strategy:

▶ Engaging More Globally: Our highest priority is to encourage private citizens to become global citizens. Involvement in exchange programs is a force for positive change and must be made relevant to wider audiences.

▶ Building Networks: The State Department must strengthen partnerships with the private sector to facilitate long-term support for youth exchange and to help them market their programs in the United States.

▶ Improve International Perception of the United States: International students experience real America - not the stereotypes formed from media overseas. Americans must be responsible for changing the face of America.

For further information about hosting visit:
www.volunteer.state.gov

For further information about the Department of State's Youth Exchange Programs visit:

<http://exchanges.state.gov/education/citizens/students>

